CHURCH HISTORY

Chapter 13 - Monasticism and the Cluny Reform

1. *The Inner Life of the Church*
    a. *the inner life of the Church has not been altogether true and perfect because of sin*
    b. *Acts 5:1-11 (Ananias and Sapphira); Acts 8:9-25 (Simon Magus)*
    c. ***Simony*** *– to buy the gift of the Spirit for money; became a very common practice in the Church of the Middle Ages*
    d. *At times the spiritual life of the Church did sink to a very low level, even in the Middle Ages*
2. *The Growth of Asceticism and Monasticism*
    a. *The general misery of the Middle Ages and the low point of religious life were reasons for men to seek spirituality that seemed to be a revival of religion. Unfortunately it was not a healthy revival as people did not return to the pure teachings of Scripture but they turned to asceticism*
    b. ***Asceticism*** *- extreme self-denial; Christians denied themselves the comforts and pleasures of life and turned to religious meditation and the performance of religious forms and rituals*
    c. *In the West cloister life developed - monasticism in the usual sense of the word where the monks and nuns practiced asceticism in convents or monasteries; abstained possession of earthly goods; did not eat and drink more than was necessary - ate nothing but bread, and drank only water; frequently fasted; also chastised themselves with whips or scourges; all abstained from marriage; devoted their time to praying, reading religious books, and meditating*
    d. *The final step was the formation of* ***monastic orders****, unions of cloisters under one rule*
3. *Monasticism Is Based on Error*
    a. *the monks rendered great services to the cause of civilization; the monasteries stood as islands of refuge - served as inns for travelers, as hospitals for the sick; centers of agriculture and learning*
    b. ***monasticism*** *was based upon the recognition by the Church of a higher and lower morality - if one wished to be a Christian in a higher sense one should become a monk or nun as they were called "the religious"; this differentiation between a higher and a lower morality is a false distinction; the underlying error that it is a method of attaining holiness is thinking that the sinful heart is cleansed by fleeing from this world*
    c. *Many monasteries in the 9th century no longer observed the rules of asceticism that shared in the general decay of the times and became breeding places of wickedness; the Christianity of the great masses was largely on the surface - observing forms and practices was considered sufficient for the common Christian, and thinking that becoming "religious" means going to monasteries*
4. *The Monastery at Cluny*
    a. *in every age there have been true Christians*
    b. ***William the Pious****, duke of Aquitaine, founded a new monastery at Cluny in eastern France in 910 where the rules of asceticism were strictly observed*
    c. ***The Cluny movement*** *spread far and wide to other monasteries that in the next two hundred years the great Cluny reform was a powerful force in the improvement of the religious life of the Church; although it took an erroneous form, was nevertheless an expression of a genuine spiritual awakening*
    d. *the Cluny movement had a tremendous influence on the Church that even produced the great* ***Hildebrand****, who as pope became known as* ***Gregory VII***
    e. *other names:* ***Cluniac Reforms*** *or* ***Benedictine Reform***